

The Random Jottoings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

The Parkers of Extwistle

The Parkers of Extwistle were an ancient Lancashire family with a long and storied history. Their origins were shrouded in obscurity, but according to Sr. Whitaker's History of Whalley, it was speculated that their lineage could be traced back to a keeper of Ightenhil named John Parcour de Hightenhul. Over time, the name became hereditary, and the Parkers of Extwistle emerged.

The family's presence in the historical records dates back to the 15th century. A William Parker is mentioned in 1409, during the reign of Henry IV, and a John Parker of Extwistle is recorded in 1429, during the reign of Henry VI. These early Parkers were likely lessees under the Abbey of Newbo.

As the centuries passed, the Parkers of Extwistle began to intermarry with prominent families in the area, cementing their connections to the local gentry. Edward Tempest of Yellison married Jane, the daughter of John Parker of Extwistle. Thomas Lister, Esq., of Arnoldsbiggin, married Elizabeth, another daughter of John Parker. The Parkers also married into families like the Towneleys of Royle, the Bannisters of Cuerden, and the Parkers of Browsholme, solidifying their descent from illustrious lineages in northern England.

The Parkers of Extwistle remained loyal to the Stuart dynasty during the tumultuous times of political unrest. Their allegiance to the Stuarts often led them into trouble with opposing factions.

During the siege of Skipton Castle by the Roundheads, a party raided Briercliffe and Extwistle, targeting supporters of the Royal cause. In response, Mr. Parker of Extwistle Hall swiftly hid away their cattle and valuables, foiling the marauders' attempts to plunder their property. Although the raiders tried to set fire to the hall, they were forced to flee, resulting in minimal damage.

In the year 1701, several leading Jacobins formed an intriguing institution with political undertones. Masquerading as a convivial and jolly group, they established a mock corporate body known as the Mayor and Corporation of Walton, located near Preston. The meetings took place at a small public house called the "Unicorn," and their activities were conducted with whimsical formality. The group possessed a register documenting their activities, as well as ceremonial items such as a mace, a sword of state, and four large silver-covered staves. One of these staves, inscribed with the words "The gift of Bannister Parker of Extwistle, Esq., for the use of the Corporation of Walton, 1721," was donated by a member named Bannister Parker. Each staff featured engraved names of the Mayor and other officers of this peculiar self-made corporation. However, with the rebellion of 1745 and the loss of its key members, the institution gradually faded away, and its register and staves eventually came into the possession of Sir Henry Hoghton, Bart., before finding their way to Cuerden Hall.

Legends and ghostly tales also surrounded the Parkers of Extwistle. Captain Robert Parker, one of the bailiffs inscribed on the staff of the mock corporation, allegedly witnessed a spectral funeral procession passing through the gate between Extwistle Hall and the Old Tithe House. In the dead of night, the eerie procession moved silently, and on the coffin, Captain Parker saw his own name inscribed. These supernatural occurrences added an air of mystery to the family's already intriguing history.

By Donald Jay